West Baden, the Hoosier Monte Carlo, Where Even the Children Gamble

(CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.)

in the centre. You place your money in a slot at the top, push down a lever and the dial spins. When it stops if the indicator points to the color or figure into which the money was placed the winnings fall jingling into a convenient receptacle.

The percentage against the players must be enormous, as the machines only pay even money on red and black, and there are also white, green, yellow and blue spaces, which are less frequent and pay more. These machines are constantly patronized, and one would imagine that they would collect all the small change that reaches West Baden. Most of them work with nickels, but one is marked for "two bits" only and requires quarters.

Baby Gamblers.

Children tease their parents for five cent pieces to put into the slots for the fun of experimenting with the doubtful possibilities of increasing their capital. I noticed one young matron this afternoon who had an attendant give her change in quick succession for three silver dollars while her little girl stood on a chair and dropped the nickels into the slot.

There are plenty of diversions for the afternoon. The favorite is the bath, which comes in an infinite and tempting variety. There is a long list to choose from to suit the most fastidious taste, ranging from the electric bath, at $2, to the regular swim in the pool at 40 cents. The mud bath is easily supreme in popularity. It is specially recommended to various seekers after health as well as to those who come here for rest and amusement. For this afternoon function the men disrobe in a large room containing a score of cots. Clad in an airy towel they then proceed to an ordinary hot room with a temperature of 160 degrees.

When their pores are thoroughly opened the bathers are transferred to a steam room for a dose of moist heat. If they still survive they are led to a bed of real mud—not the brownish yellow kind that grows in New York streets and that brushes off when it dries, but a bluish black mud that would leave a deep stain to mark its presence. It comes from the bed of one of the springs, where it has been saturated with minerals for ages, and it is boiled with sulphur water to make it nice and soft and to bring out and accentuate its native scents.

How a razorback would enjoy wallowing in that mud!

The bather steps in and an attendant pats the hot stuff all over him as far as his neck and then covers him with a rubber sheet, so that none of the heat can escape. With his hands pinioned in the mud he then remains fifteen minutes, while the attendant occasionally wipes the perspiration out of his eyes. His next move is to a shower and then into a big stone tub filled with hot water, as black as though it had just been used for cooking the mud.

After a long soak he is rubbed while still in the tub, and then the cold water is turned on to cool him. A long rest follows on the couches, and the bathers exchange the news of the day. It is a democracy of the free and easy kind, and the conversation is as free from the conventionalities as is the costume. They are all sociable and friendly. Of course, the twinges of rheumatism and other ills that the flesh of the bathers has been heir to form the leading staple for the small talk. I felt quite like an invalid as several of the men, on leaving, said:—

"I hope you will be better soon."

Meal Tickets the Vogue

In the East there is a conventional joke about a man losing his meal ticket, but comparatively few persons have ever seen a real ticket of this sort. The big hotels of Saratoga get along without this method of identification, but here the tickets are very much in evidence. The patron receives one when he signs the register, and he shows the card to the guardian of the dining room door. The pasteboard is then placed in the lining of his hat, and remains there until surrendered.

I was impressed by the sociability of the colored waiter to whose care I was assigned. His manners were friendly and amiable and he carried on a running fire of conversation while plying his fan during the meals. In marked contradistinction to his attitude toward hotel patrons was his formal politeness toward other waiters. Coming in holding a tray piled with dishes high in the air on his upturned palm, he would call to the waiter at the next table:—

"You, sir, will you kindly bring a tray stand over here and oblige me, sir? Thank you, sir."

The cooking is excellent, and the bills of fare suggest those used in the East, as attempts are made here and there to give French names to dishes, and the mistakes made are about equal to the number of words printed in alleged French. In the list of vegetables one finds usually hoe cakes with buttermilk, and other dainties typical of the West and South, not often seen on the menus in the East.

Shirt Waist Beauties

There is no such display here by women of gowns and finery as is seen in the great Eastern resorts. On the piazzas in the late afternoon and in the dining room there are few elaborate dresses. Most of the women wear shirt waist suits and wash fabrics, and I have yet to see a man in a dress suit. There are practically no New Yorkers in the crowd. The hotel register in the last week showed only four arrivals from the Empire State. The patronage comes mainly from the States of Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Ohio, with a scattering from Michigan, Wisconsin and Missouri.

Many of the men have the appearance of leaders from the smaller communities; not a few are evidently farmers. They come here to get cured, to spend their money and to have a good time, and they do it in their own fashion, but with none of the ostentation familiar to Saratogans. There are none of the "swell" traps or fancy automobiles seen at the Eastern resorts, and most of the visitors are perfectly satisfied with the unpretentious style of the local livery.

There happens to be nobody with a national reputation in West Baden just now.

"Do you have many noted persons among your regular patrons?" I inquired of a well posted resident.

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "'Tony' Pastor usually comes here, and 'Joe' Ullman and 'Honest John' Kelly and—and lots of others."

A little orchestra of four or five pieces grinds out "In the Good Old Summer Time" and other classics at intervals during the day on a side piazza, while a few women sit about reading and chatting and scrutinizing the passersby. In the course of the afternoon everybody passes along this particular section of the piazza, because it leads to the club house—the general rendezvous.

As one enters in the afternoon one side of the main clubroom suggests the appearance of a conventional broker's office in New York. There are clerks at work behind a railing, and back of them stretches an immense blackboard covered with writing and figures. Rows of chairs face this for the customers. Instead of lists of stocks and the prices quoted on 'change the names of horses are given, with their jockeys, weights and the odds offered by the bookmakers on the tracks at Brighton Beach, St. Louis and Hawthorne—in other words, the place is a poolroom. There are two clocks on the wall—one showing Eastern and the other local time—for the benefit of the betting contingent.

On a long table back of the chairs are large volumes, into which the "dope" is pasted, enabling persons to get at the records of the horses with little trouble. As the news begins to come in by wire it is read off to an attentive audience. The positions of the horses during the race come in a few moments before the announcement of the winner.

Women Bet on the Races.

Men predominate in the clubroom, but there is always a fair scattering of women, some of whom occasionally step up to a window to buy a ticket with the same show of excitement that a similar transaction would involve at a racetrack. As usual elsewhere, there is a general hobnobbing about form and weather conditions and the state of the track and great misgivings at the last moment because other animals seem to have a chance.

I have noticed during the last few days that the women who patronize the poolroom seem to average better in results than do the men. Why this should be I cannot venture to explain. The women do not seem to care much for the "dope," and many of them proceed without any reference to the advice of the newspaper tipsters. Intuition is, perhaps, better than anything else in laying a wager.

A woman's good luck goes the rounds quickly in the hotel. If Mrs. Smith, of Kankakee, has made $15 in the afternoon the story goes from mouth to mouth, and she receives a shower of congratulations, and Mrs. Jones, of Kalamazoo, and Miss Brown, of Oshkosh, inquire anxiously how she knew which horses would win and if she will give them tips for the morrow.

When the men win there is less excitement, and unless their wives are present nobody is liable to know—possibly not even the wives.

Across the room from the racing cards is a line of gambling tables—two for roulette and one each for faro, Klondike, bookmakers' wheel and red and black. I have not yet seen faro dealt, possibly because the percentage in favor of the house is not great enough.

The bookmakers' wheel is unknown to patrons of Richard A. Canfield's club in Saratoga, though it is seen in some other places in the East. It is a pretty game to watch, and seems to have even more fascination for women than roulette. Mr. Canfield has explained to his friends why he got rid of the bookmakers' wheel that he found in the Saratoga Club when he bought the place from Spencer. His reason was that the percentage against the player is too great, being about eleven on each, or approximately double that on roulette. This percentage applies to the Eastern game with four figures; here there is a fifth one.

Klondike is also barred by Mr. Canfield. It is a game of dice in which each player throws against the bank, all ties counting in favor of the house, an enormous advantage where there is only a single throw.

While the racing is going on the gambling tables are practically idle. The roulette croupier will occasionally spin his ivory ball to attract attention, the Klondike man will rattle his transparent dice and the rubber ball will be sent rolling around the bookmakers' wheel, but customers are few and far between. Women may drift over to examine the tables and to have the games explained to them; but the regulation hour for play has not arrived.

Eight o'clock is the time set for beginning. Men and women after eating sit around disconsolately until then, unless they see fit to bowl or play billiards. When the clock strikes the hour the crowd shifts to the club house, and keno begins. This is the great game for women and children. The chairs facing the blackboard have been shifted from their straight rows and now encircle six tables, each intended to accommodate twelve persons.

The tables are littered with numbered cards and with buttons for use as markers. Numbers are drawn and called out in loud tones, and the person who first covers a line of five wins as large a share of the total sum invested in the game as the manager sees fit to turn over. As many cards may be taken at once as desired, the rate being twenty-five cents a card. It is simply the children's game of lotto played for money.

The game brings together the greatest crowd of the day, far more persons than ever gather at one time in the dining room, as the meal hours are long and many of the patrons rush through their food and get away in very quick order. The women have donned their best attire—light silks, satins and laces—and they come trooping in, very many of them leading their children, chubby girls with huge sashes, pink or white socks and slippers, and small boys in white and blue sailor suits and knickerbockers.

All the seats at the keno tables are quickly filled. There is a sprinkling of men—six or eight in all, perhaps—and most of these are merely acting as escorts for youngsters or for their wives and supplying the funds for the cards.

The chief reason for the popularity of keno with the fair sex appears to be that one may remain in the game for some time at a comparatively small expense, as it is apt to take from five to ten minutes to learn one's fate, and the money is not brushed aside in a moment, as it is in some of the other games.

Keno starts with a bustle of excitement. An attendant goes around collecting the money and proclaiming in loud tones the numbers of the cards selected. The women are liable to ponder deeply before they finally make their selections.

Selecting Keno Cards.

"I won't take that 61 any more," exclaims a buxom matron to her neighbor. "It's the worst card in the deck, and I know that it hasn't won in a fortnight. Which of these should be the luckiest, 30, 125 or 72?"

"What card do you want?" inquires the attendant.

"I guess I'll take 125. There ought to be luck in odd numbers, though I haven't struck it yet," resumes the woman.

"Number 125!" yells the dealer, and the record is made, but the woman is not yet satisfied. She has spied on the table a card marked 99, and she reaches over for it with the comment:—"I ought to win with that, surely. It is the price I paid per yard for the material in this dress, and the dress is very lucky for me. I won $9 the last time I wore it."

She has the number changed, and then her companion decides that she, too, should make a shift, settling on the discarded 125, because that figure represented the cost of some article of her attire. It is, of course, essential to have the record straight, as several women have discovered to their sorrow this week. After winning with cards with numbers other than those they had announced they were deprived of the stakes they believed they had won. In one instance of this kind the woman retreated from the room sobbing pitifully and wiping tears from her eyes.

While the game is in progress there is a buzz of conversation among the fair players.

"What a dreadful card! I haven't a button on yet," says one.

"Was that 18 or 80 he called?" asked another.

"What was the number before the last one?" inquires a third. "I missed it, and, oh, dear! I know I should have won if I had counted it, and now I'm sure to lose."

"If I'd taken the card I wanted to I'd have won already. It's too mean the numbers on this card won't come," declares a fourth.

Then comes "keno" in a tone of triumph, followed by a volley of "Ohs!" and "I nearly had it!" The numbers of the winning line are read by the attendant, and if all are right he demands:—"Has any other player keno?" Unless there is a prompt reply in the affirmative, the chips representing the winnings are immediately turned over to the lucky one. One woman, all aflutter, called keno last night after having by mistake covered her 6 when 66 had been called.

Everybody had, as usual, swept the buttons from the cards, and it was necessary to have repeated the numbers of all the balls hitherto drawn. And so wags the game for an hour or so, until the time comes for the little ones to retire, and as soon as the women begin to scatter keno ceases for the night.

Daring Woman Plunger.

The beginning of the keno gives impetus to the other games. Before last night the only female patron had been a big woman, with white clothes and auburn hair, crowned with a white felt hat of the "Rough Rider" variety, with the brim tilted well forward over her eyes. She was not only the first to enter, but the only person of her sex of mature years who wore a hat of any kind.

She made two fifty cent bets on the Klondike, which she lost, then a dollar bet, which she won, getting even. She moved to the bookmakers' wheel, lost $2 there, and she then tried the colors on the roulette board with no better result.

Men came straggling in, but stood around and did little until the keno tables were filled. Then of a sudden three other games were running with good patronage. There were at the outset three women at the roulette table, all standing, while the seats were occupied by men with their hats on the backs of their heads and puffing on black cigars. One of the women was handling the chips, and, apparently, the other two were interested in her game and were keeping up a running fire of sage advice that went something like this:—

"I told you that the first dozen was bound to come out and you should have covered it. Don't risk that chip on No. 36—by shoving it into the corner you can win on any one of four numbers. That is safer. It was red and odd last time, it ought to be black and even. Don't you think we should cover the 2, so as to take in the green ones also? Goodness, gracious! the 8! I had a hunch on that. Didn't I tell you that it must come even? Please put something on the middle columns; it should come there again. I feel sure that it will be above 17 this trip and that's safer than the red or black. I know it's wasting money to have that chip on 13."

At this juncture the ball landed in the 13 hole. The player cashed in and made a rush for the keno table to communicate the good news and to settle down there for the evening.

She Lost a Quarter

There had been a lull at the bookmakers' wheel when two girls approached. One of them had been holding a quarter in her hand. She deposited the coin in the even money division. The man in charge placed his finger on one of the shining nickel points, making the wheel revolve slowly. The ball stopped at the 5.

"You would have had 5 for 1 if you had put your money here," said the man gathering in the quarter and tapping the 5 space.

"That wasn't fair. You didn't turn that for me. You must do it over again," cried the girl. So insistent was she on this point that the money was replaced and a good twist was given to the wheel. This time No. 2 appeared and the two girls retreated, presumably to get more funds, as they returned presently with a dollar.

Klondike was making a good run for the house. There were always three or four players, and whenever any one of them dropped out there was somebody ready to take his place. In two hours, I believe, every person who played lost. The bets ranged from twenty-five cents to $2 on a throw. In an adjoining room at the rear there was an open game of poker, with the usual liberal "rake off" for the house. Seven men sat in the game; one of them had two little girls of less than eight years in chairs behind him. There are several private rooms up stairs, but for these there was no demand.

At French Lick the scenes in the club connected with the hotel are substantially similar. All the gambling that I have seen has been on a very small scale by comparison with the games in the Saratoga, Manhattan, United States and Chicago clubs at Saratoga last summer, or those conducted in the Pennsylvania, New York, Long Branch and Ocean clubs at Long Branch two or three years ago. The players here now are of the class that the big Eastern gamblers would call "pikers."

For the gambling privilege at West Baden, I am informed, Edward Ballard pays the hotel corporation $36,000 a year. This seems very reasonable, despite the fact that the entire frame building of which he occupies part could probably be duplicated for less than he pays each year.

Ballard is well known to the gambling fraternity throughout the United States, and his friends assert that he has the reputation of always having been square. Indeed, there would appear no reason for him otherwise, as he is certain to accumulate money so long as he can get players in his place, and there could be no object in having "crooked" wheels. Natives here tell, with bated breath, the story of Ballard's rise in the world.

Many Hoosiers take pride in the liberal minded policy that permits women as well as men in the gambling houses, laughing at the "puritanical" Saratoga method of having high priced cafés from which fashionable women could watch the men from a distance without permission to cross the threshold.

Praised by the Poetess

The Journal, a local publication, prints this week an effusion from the pen of Julia Wagner Ward, of Murphysboro, described in headlines as "Illinois' gifted poetess," who waxes enthusiastic and says:—"The West Baden Springs evidently have the greatest reputation of any medicinal springs on the face of the globe. They are especially adapted to stomach and liver ailments, at the same time being a permanent cure for numerous other complaints." On the subject of the big hostlery she rhapsodizes thus:—

> This hotel is fully entitled to more than ordinary notice, inasmuch as it is a marvel of architectural splendor, and is without doubt the most unique hotel in the world. As regards modern conveniences, it is complete in every detail and is absolutely fireproof. It is conducted upon both the American and European plans, and it is needless to say that the service in every way is all that could be desired. Grandeur, elegance and patriotism are manifest throughout all the spacious apartments. The halls and stairways are grand and imposing, and the spacious parlors (thirty in number) are sumptuously furnished in rich tapestry and Oriental hangings.

Purists may laugh at the claim made in the advertisements and re-echoed by the gifted poetess that this is the "most unique" hotel, but all who have seen it agree that it is a marvel. On the site of the great structure stood for many years a rambling frame building which had grown from small original dimensions by the addition of various long "L's" until it finally contained four hundred rooms. The hotel burned to the ground on June 14, 1901, and Mr. Sinclair immediately set to work to construct the hotel described in the local paper as "the eighth wonder of the world." One year from the date of the fire he was able to move into his own quarters, and on September 15 last the doors were thrown open for patrons. While the building is not yet fully completed according to the plans, it is practically so, and the business in the first summer season is exceeding all expectations.

Marvel of a Building

The claims made in connection with the building are decidely interesting, and I give them as a I get them, without attempting to verify them:—

There are 60,000 square feet of tiling in the dome.

The building contains 3,000 closets, of which 1,200 are clothes and linen closets.

The glass in the dome if laid end to end would make a walk sixteen inches wide and two and three-quarter miles long.

There is more glass in the building than in any building in the world, not even excepting the famous Crystal Palace, in London.

The dimensions of the dining room and the ball room are each eighty-four by ninety-four feet. The ceiling of the dining room is more than twenty feet from the floor.

The hotel contains 708 rooms, each of which is provided with a bath, lavatory, clothes closet, steam heat, electric lights, hot and cold water and telephone.

The floor space in the hotel, including the atrium, is fifteen acres. The floor space of the building proper is 237,720 square feet, while that of the atrium is 62,832 square feet. The air space in the atrium is 2,730,000 cubic feet.

The hub of the dome is 10 feet long and 16 feet in diameter and weighs 8½ tons. Each of the twenty-four steel ribs which stretch from the hub to the walls weighs 4½ tons. The total amount of steel in the dome is 120½ tons. The ribs rest on rollers on top of the supporting columns, thus providing for the expansion and contraction of the metal.

The outside of the hotel building measures 1,010 feet. The atrium has a circumference of 600 feet and a diameter of 200 feet. The only other building in the world having a large dome constructed of steel is the Capitol at Washington. It is only 128 feet in diameter, however, and therefore much smaller than the dome at West Baden. The great dome at St. Petersburg, which is the second largest in the world, is only 160 feet in diameter, or 40 feet less than the dome of the West Baden Springs Hotel.

There were used in the construction of the building 1,275 carloads of material, distributed as follows:—Twelve cars of miscellaneous material, thirteen cars of stone, sixteen cars of red brick, twenty-six cars of lime, forty-five cars of steel, fifty-one cars of lumber, sixty-two cars of cement, 171 cars of gravel, 187 cars of sand, 242 cars of cinders, 450 cars of white brick. Most of the stone for the foundations was quarried on the grounds. Most of the lumber was used for false flooring, platforms, &c., which were removed after the completion of the building.

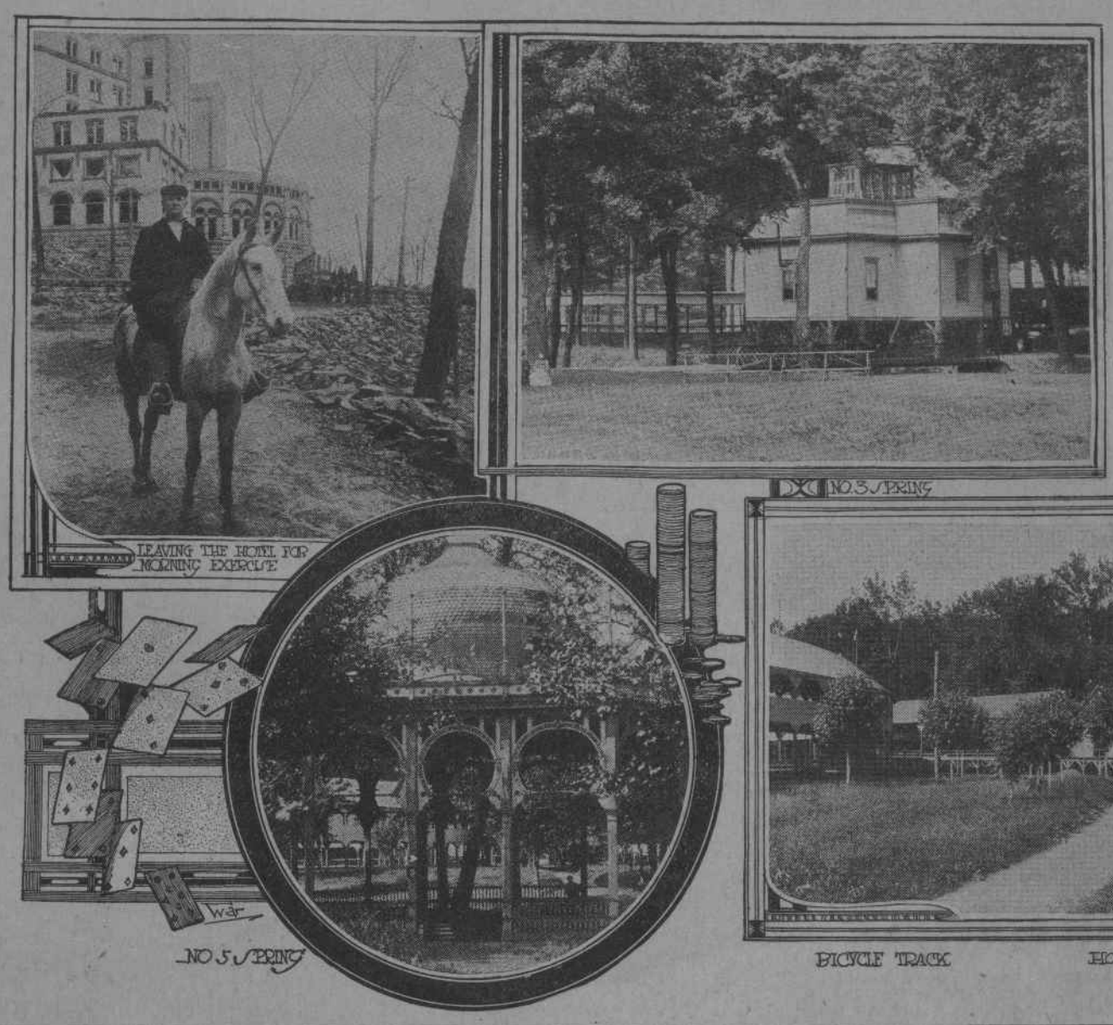
In the Cool of the Atrium

The atrium is a delightfully cool lounging place at this season of the year, and it is said to remain at practically the same temperature throughout the winter, as it is heated by enormous steel coils. The inner rooms on the six floors overlooking it have no heating apparatus, and depend upon their open windows. The bathing arrangements are all that could be desired in a strictly modern sanitarium.

The hotel has no café, but persons whose thirst is not assuaged by the sulphated saline water and the other grades of mineral waters, may obtain liquor in a drug store in the building, or may find an infinite variety of drinks in the village saloons. Sunday is strictly observed, and even the club house is closed.

West Baden and French Lick are well worth visiting, despite the fact that they are quite difficult of access from the East. They are on a branch of the Monon route, 278 miles south of Chicago by rail and 80 miles north of Louisville. To reach them from the East involves at least two changes of cars, first to the Monon route, and then, at Orleans, to the branch road. I started from the Grand Central station, and, on a luxurious train on the Big Four road, reached Greencastle, Ind., where I changed to the Monon. There is an ample selection of roads from the East that tap the Monon at some point, but it is a long, slow trip at best.

A trolley line is now being built between West Baden and French Lick, and another steam road is contemplated. Among the improvements discussed is a great race track.



A Morning with Poor Teacher in the Vacation School.

Glimpse of the Work That Is a Boon Alike to Mothers and Children.

BECKY JABOSKY!"

"Present!"

"Rachel Jarinsky!"

"Please, teacher, she's gone to the country. She won't be here any more."

The k's, l's and m's are soon disposed of in the Ghetto school, but teacher must spend a long time over j's and y's. By the time the latter are reached the children are beginning to ferment with the bacteria called desire to be at work on the baskets, which, of course, cannot begin until teacher has finished the sixty names through which she blunders every day. The "vacation school" is one of many on the lower east side, where the races that go to make up our metropolitan life are in the first state of mixture. These schools are a real boon to mothers and children alike. The children are dismissed at noon.

The roll call goes on.

"Esther Zabrinsky!"

"Present!"

"Sarah Zanronobossky!"

"Please, teacher, I am here to-day, but I am going to leave vacation school. My mamma thinks I look pale, so she is going to take me to the Catskills."

"But, Sarah, when you return you will come back?"

"I ain't coming back before real school opens, teacher. I don't have to stay in the city all summer," Sarah answered, looking sneeringly at her less fortunate companions. Sarah belonged to the four hundred of Rivington street. Her father kept a sausage store, one of the less fortunate had confidingly told teacher.

At last the roll was finished. As the book was closed with a relieved look on the part of both teacher and scholars—for it was a trying time for both—a voice piped up from the end of the room:—"Please, teacher, you did not call this little girl's name."

"What is it?"

"Hannah"— Then came a jumble of letters and sounds and teacher was afraid to put the name in her book until she had it "spelled out."

"Come to my desk and spell your name for me."

Hannah and her spokesman marched to the desk.

"Spell your last name."

"Please, teacher, she can't."

"How old are you, Hannah?"

"Twelve," put in the spokesman.

"And not know how to spell your name? Well, pronounce it slowly and I will see if I can spell it."

"Hannah Swarnitchvithenich."

"Bring it on a piece of paper to-morrow, dear. That will do now; go to your seats."

The work of the day was now to begin—the inspection of work which had been taken home and new work commenced.

"To-day, children, we are to make a handkerchief bag of braided raffia. I forgot to wear mine to-day." Teacher fibbed, for she despised the things, and only taught them because she had to. "They are very pretty to hang at your side, you know."

The faces before her fell. "Please, teacher, ain't we to make no baskets to-day? No?" ventured the chubby, red haired Sadie Rimstein, whose papa kept a hat factory and employed "ladies and gentlemen" to work for him.

"No, children. To-day we must make the handkerchief bags. They are very pretty and so useful."

"Are they the style?" broke out irrepressible Rosie Switzenburgen, the despair and delight of teacher's heart. Teacher assured the children that they were the style, the very latest, and they set to work with a will that is born of an hereditary desire to get everything that there is to get free.

"Teacher, be you a Jew?" asked Beckie Jatnosky.

"No."

"You speak Jewish? No?"

Teacher had to acknowledge her ignorance.

Further conversation was interrupted by, "Teacher! Teacher! Beckie Cohen has stoled my needle!"

"No I didn't, teacher; she lost it."

Teacher hastened to the far end of the room to settle the dispute.

"Did you take her needle?"

"No, ma'am."

"Yes, ma'am, she did."

It was hard to decide which was guilty, the accuser or the accused, for the teacher of Room No. 10 lacked the wisdom of a Solomon. Such cases were frequent and usually were settled by the possessor remaining in possession.

Meanwhile, by dint of much encouragement on the part of teacher, the despised bags were near completion and recess time was nigh. It was hard work to make the children lay down their bags, but teacher promised to play a game with them. That was very satisfying, for did it not mean turns in holding her hands?

Recess time is a soul disturbing time for the east side boy or girl who does good work. Good baskets take wings and fly away during this period, for the children are not allowed to take their work into the yard.

"Teacher, may I put my work on your desk?" comes the cry from all sides.

"But," remonstrates teacher, "are the baskets safe even there? Why, the teacher of chair caning had her pocketbook stolen yesterday."

Righteous indignation and innocence are on every childish face. To steal from teacher was indeed a crime.

"Please, teacher, can I be monitor?"

"I promised Sadie Einstein." Teacher looked at a dignified daughter of Israel, who at once arose from her seat.

"My name ain't Sadie Einstein any more. I didn't like that name. My name now is Celia London."

Teacher meekly took the correction, and Celia walked proudly to her place at the head of the line.

After recess the time soon slips by to twelve o'clock, and vacation school is over.